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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 000827

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ELA, AF/SPG, AF/C

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/10/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [SU](#) [CD](#) [QA](#) [EG](#)

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH SLA UNITY DEPUTY HARIR

Classified By: Counselor for Economic and Political Affairs Catherine Hill-Herndon for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. Key Points:

-- SLA Unity Deputy Chairman and Foreign Affairs Representative Sharif Abdalla Harir (protect) said that SLA Unity members that signed the Tripoli, Libya Agreement, in April, were not authorized to do so by the 51-man council, or Chairman Abdallah Yahya.

-- Harir met with Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) leader Khalil Ibrahim and rejected his proposal to join JEM due to ideological differences.

-- The Doha process has catered to Islamists, but SLA-Unity will participate if it is invited to by Qatari Minister of State al-Mahmoud, and if there is something in it for the group.

-- A ceasefire in Darfur is difficult to obtain because militias are unwilling to turn over the weapons and control for security to the Government of Sudan (GOS).

-- Both Government of Egypt (GOE) and the USG can play significant roles in resolving the Darfur situation. However Sudanese President Bashir cannot be part of the solution.

12. Comment: Harir is an engaging personality and it was evident that, unlike many other Darfuri rebel leaders, he is educated. However, he wore his military vest and pants to the meeting to convey that he was a soldier involved in a war. Despite Harir's skepticism about the Doha process, it was obvious that one of the reasons he requested a meeting with Embassy Cairo was to inform us that he and SLA Unity had not been invited to participate. Harir is not a supported of the Abuja Agreement, but he implied that the lack of USG willingness to hold the GOS' feet to the fire on the agreement makes him wary to enter into another U.S.-backed process. Our meeting with Harir was postponed two times and we learned that he had come to Cairo from Chad to receive medical treatment for an unknown ailment. End Comment.

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Signatories to Tripoli Agreement Don't Represent SLA-Unity  
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13. (C) SLA Unity Deputy Chairman and Foreign Affairs Representative Sharif Abdalla Harir told us on May 7 that the SLA Unity members that signed the Tripoli, Libya Agreement, in April, were not authorized by the 51-man council or Chairman Abdallah Yahya to represent SLA Unity. He stated that he and other Unity leaders had been there from the "start of the resistance" and they have the support of many IDPs and refugees. Harir described himself as "an Anthropology professor who was forced to carry a Kalashnikov"

because of the actions of the GOS.

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Harir, SLA Unity Not Joining JEM  
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14. (C) Harir told us that that he met with JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim in N'djamena during the previous week and was given an ultimatum to join JEM. He stated that he will not be joining JEM, or even working with JEM as there are significant points of difference between JEM and SLA Unity. Harir said that SLA Unity is a center-leftist group, while Khalil and 17 of the 19 JEM leaders are "Islamists." He said that Khalil Ibrahim is trying to unify the Darfuri opposition by force or "buying off people" to accede to JEM. Harir said JEM does not have a following in Darfur, but it is only relevant because Chadian President Deby arms Khalil to guard the Chad-Sudan border. He realizes JEM needs to be involved in talks, but not to the exclusion of other groups.

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Skeptical, But Open to Doha Talks  
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15. (C) Harir told us that he was open to the Doha process if he saw some potential for SLA-Unity. However, he said that neither he, nor SLA Unity Chairman Abdallah Yahya, have been invited to attend the Doha talks. Harir sent a letter to Qatari Minister of State al-Mahmoud on December 15, 2008 asking for details on the Doha process and its goals. However, to date, he has never received a response to his letter. He told U.K. Special Envoy Michael O'Neill, in

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February 2009, that SLA Unity was willing to meet in Doha, but Harir has yet to hear anything from al-Mahmoud.

16. (C) Harir told us that he was skeptical that the Doha process is moving and he said the Qataris don't understand Sudan. He said that the perception of the Darfur process is that the Qataris are catering to "Islamists." Harir pointed to Doha's close relationship with Hassan al-Turabi and its focus on the JEM as evidence of the "Islamist ties". He said that UN/AU Mediator Bassole was only a "passenger" in the Doha process and was not doing anything substantial. Harir asserted that the Qataris were the only ones driving the process and he was not comfortable with that arrangement.

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Ceasefire Needed, But Difficult to Obtain  
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17. (C) Harir told us that a ceasefire is needed because IDPs need to be provided with food and medicine, and he admitted it is "difficult to talk, while shooting." However, he said that implementation of a ceasefire will be difficult unless the militias are allowed to keep their weapons, and assured that they will part of the "new security arrangement" in Darfur. Harir said it is impossible for the armed groups to turn security back over to the people who perpetrated the violence in Darfur.

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Bashir Does Not Abide by Agreements  
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18. (C) Harir stated that the Bashir Government does not abide by the agreements that it signs. He pointed to the Abuja Agreement, as evidence that Khartoum's signature means nothing. Harir said his brother-in-law, Minni Minawi, made the mistake of trusting the GOS by "trading in his guns in for a suit, tie, and job that didn't exist." He said that SLA Unity is willing to work with the National Congress Party (NCP) on a solution in Darfur, but he stated that "Bashir is history and should not be counted as part of the solution."

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Egypt Can Play a Major Role in Resolving Darfur  
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¶9. (C) Harir said that any agreement on Darfur must include regional countries such as Chad, the Central African Republic, Eritrea, Libya, and Egypt. He told us that Egypt's historical links to Darfur and its ability to work with Khartoum and the Sudanese elites give it a "major role." Harir said the GOE is also in a position to facilitate agreement among the other regional countries. Harir stated that EGIS Chief Soliman is the key person on Sudan in the GOE because he has a "deep knowledge" of the situation. However, he opined that the Egyptian MFA are "outsiders."

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U.S. Can Help to Resolve Darfur  
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¶10. (C) Harir said that SLA Unity is looking for a comprehensive and just political settlement that is representative of all tribes and ethnic groups in Darfur and would decentralize the political, economic and security authority. He stated that he did not expect the USG to solve the problems of Darfur, but he said the U.S. could play a role in helping to resolve the crises. Harir encouraged the USG to consult with Darfuri Americans and bring them into the process. He warned that the U.S. must leave no doubt where it stands on the Darfur issue or the GOS will manipulate the discussions and any agreement.  
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